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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 003141

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/18/2015
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MCAP](#) [NL](#) [MASS](#) [XA](#)
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/SOUTH AFRICA: READOUT OF DAVID
RADCLIFFE'S VISIT TO THE HAGUE

REF: A. THE HAGUE 2973

[1](#)B. THE HAGUE 2465

Classified By: Acting DCM Andrew Schofer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: DOD Regional Director for Southern Africa David Radcliffe's November 10 visit to The Hague successfully followed up DASD Whelan's earlier meetings here by capitalizing on renewed Dutch interest in South Africa. Radcliffe's discussions with Dutch MFA and MOD interlocutors spurred progress in three areas. First, Dutch counterparts may review the prioritized list of training needs that South Africans plan to submit under the ACOTA framework and identify areas where Dutch initiatives can complement those undertaken by the U.S. in order to maximize efficiencies. Second, the Dutch are receptive to U.S. interest in engaging the South Africans in regional maritime security initiatives; the GONL may extend an invitation to the South Africans to send an observer during the upcoming period of Dutch command of Task Force 150. Finally, the Dutch are enthusiastic about engaging the South African Military through NATO. Radcliffe's visit reportedly inspired the Dutch permanent representative to NATO to request a briefing from USNATO about related U.S. activities. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On November 10, David Radcliffe, DOD Regional Director for Southern Africa, met with officials from the Foreign Affairs and Defense Ministries to give them a readout of his recent meetings with representatives of the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) and discuss ways to bolster the SANDF's effectiveness. Dutch interlocutors included Lt. Col. Mike Calmeyer Meijburg (Netherlands Defense Attache to South Africa), Hans Theunissen (Head, Southern Africa Division, MFA), Lt. Col. Peter Froling (Chief, Bi-/Multilateral Cooperation, MOD), Martin Koper (Security Advisor, Sub-Saharan Africa Department, MFA), and Jan Geert Siccama (Deputy Director for Policy, MOD).

[1](#)3. (C) Dutch officials echoed Radcliffe's assessment of the SANDF's declining capabilities. Consequently, in October the Dutch signed a memorandum of understanding with the GOSA to support SANDF regional peace and security operations with funds and training (ref A). MFA and MOD officers seized on three initiatives from Radcliffe's presentation: SANDF's List of Prioritized Training under the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) framework, Regional Maritime Security, and cooperation between NATO and the South African Development Community (SADC).

SANDF's Training Priorities and ACOTA

[1](#)4. (C) Radcliffe explained that the SANDF has agreed to compile a prioritized list of training the U.S. could provide under the ACOTA program. He asked if the Dutch would consider coordinating with us to provide training. The Dutch eagerly accepted the offer, and welcomed more information on ACOTA. Koper said assisting with ACOTA programs might be a ready way for Dutch forces to gain experience working in Africa. The Dutch invited ACOTA program coordinators to visit the Hague as soon as possible.

Regional Maritime Security

[1](#)5. (C) On the issue of maritime security, Radcliffe noted South Africa's relatively advanced Navy and our desire for an African regional effort to police the southwest Indian Ocean. Seizing on this point, Siccama referenced his minister's comments on maritime security at the recent NATO informal ministerial in Berlin (ref B). Piracy in the Straits of Malacca and off Somalia has affected Dutch shipping, he explained. Siccama added that the Netherlands would have command of Task Force 150 (TF150) from December to May 2006. He suggested that, in the interest of facilitating South African familiarization with TF150 activities, the Dutch could take a South African officer on board its flagship during that time.

NATO-SADC Cooperation

16. (C) Radcliffe also said his staff, along with Embassy Pretoria, are looking at how NATO can share with SADC its experiences building a common security architecture. Dutch officials reacted positively to the idea. In a subsequent discussion with poloff, Hans Sandee (Head of Security and Defense Policy, MFA) said that, pursuant to Radcliffe's presentation, the Dutch NATO permrep Herman Schaper had raised the issue during a NATO recess meeting. Sandee said Schaper wanted to continue looking at the possibility and suggested USNATO staff contact him directly.

Comment

17. (C) Comment: The Great Lakes peace process is a top foreign policy priority for the Dutch, and they view SANDF's capabilities as critical to peace in that region in particular and African security in general. The Dutch are looking for concrete ways to use their MOU with the GOSA; Radcliffe's suggestions are coming at an opportune time. More broadly, the GONL is looking for ways its military can complement development ministry security sector reform programs viewed as critical to African development. As one MFA official put it, "the Netherlands is just beginning its support of the security sector in Africa." We should keep the Dutch in mind when considering partners for security sector reform and disarmament programs in Africa. End Comment.

18. (C) Radcliffe has cleared this cable.
BLAKEMAN